

NSC BRIEFING

25X1A

11 January 1955

CHINESE OFFSHORE ISLANDS

I. ChiCom attacks--both air and sea--on Nationalist shipping in Tachens area (10 and 11 Jan) are heaviest yet staged. First report of sea-battle says Tachens now left without any ChiNat Naval support. Islands already almost without air support, garrisoned by green troops. As result, Tachens extremely vulnerable to ChiCom amphibious attack (which could come any time).

A. Air assault (10 Jan) seemed aimed disrupt Nationalist rotation of Tachen garrison (with new troops from Formosa) begun 21 Dec '54. Hit during second phase in rotation, when harbor filled with Nationalist ships--only DE on station, three LST's, many smaller vessels.

B. For seven hours, ChiCom fighters and bombers (reports range between 65 and 100) struck at shipping, hit all three LST's also the DE. One LST, loaded with artillery ammunition, caught fire and is believed to be total loss. Damage to the other vessels was relatively light, but about 150 personnel wounded, 10 killed.

After air attack, which caught Tachen command "flatfooted," all ships put to sea. Shortly after midnight 11 Jan, were intercepted by unknown number ChiCom torpedo boats. One Nationalist gunboat was hit and abandoned. The air-hit DE was struck again, is reported enroute to Formosa with severe damage. Other details on sea battle are not yet known.

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- II. Result of this Communist one-two punch is that Tachens are wide open to any invasion. Without effective air and naval support, islands would be captured quickly.
- III. Situation in other major coastal islands held by the Nationalists--the Matsus and the Quemoy--is relatively quiet.
 - A. Communist guns continue to shell the Quemoy sporadically, but with little effect.
 - B. Communists are now reported to be using a new road in Fukien Province, opposite Matsus, which apparently leads to coastal artillery positions reported under construction within range of some of the Matsus.